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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001954

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [BA](#) [BILAT](#) [CTR](#) [POL](#)  
SUBJECT: AS EXPECTED, COURT FINDS ALLEGED TERRORIST CELL  
MEMBERS NOT GUILTY

REF: A. MANAMA 1507  
[B](#). MANAMA 1156  
[C](#). MANAMA 0766

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (SBU) In the expected final move of a legal process that began in June 2004, Bahrain's Higher Criminal Court November 20 found four Bahrainis accused of planning to carry out terrorist attacks not guilty of any remaining charges. The four, Mohieddine Khan, Yaser Kamal, Bassam Ali, and Bassam Bokhowa, and their lawyers greeted the verdict with joy and counter-charges. In a statement distributed to the press, Khan thanked God that the truth had come to light and that all the accusations against him and the other three accused had been found to be false. "The court verdict was the proper answer to those who falsely accused us of being terrorists. We seek compensatory damages from the executive authorities for the arrests" and several detentions over the past few years. He claimed to have lost at least BD 700,000 (\$1.855 million) in business due to the ordeal. He asked the government to give the four men jobs and remove travel restrictions and security force monitoring of their telephones and movements. He also demanded an official apology.

[2](#). (C) The not-guilty verdict was pre-ordained as a result of the June 2006 constitutional court decision that Penal Code conspiracy charges against the four were unconstitutional (Ref B). It was only a matter of time before the Higher Criminal Court either dismissed any remaining charges or found the defendants not guilty. The new counter-terrorism law, which entered into force on August 12, has yet to be applied in any legal cases. Article 18 of the new law criminalizes conspiracy to carry out a terrorist act, but it remains to be seen whether this clause will be upheld in any constitutional challenge (Ref A).

[3](#). (C) Comment: Leveraging the notoriety he has gained as a result of this case, Khan is a candidate for the parliamentary seat representing the first district of the Southern Governorate. The incumbent, who is running for re-election, is independent Salafi Jassem Al Saeedi. Al Saeedi is expected to easily retain his seat in the November 25 election.

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